





Swing

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"Ever since I saw the movie 'Swing Kids,' I've wanted to learn," Scott Shoji said. " I just didn't know where to go.'

Like many first-time dancers, Shoji was influenced by the growing popularity of the swing style in movies, music and even commercials.

The contemporary swing movement of the 1990s began creeping its way back into pop culture when the jazz band Squirrel Nut Zippers broke into modern radio with the song "Hot." That opened up the path for swing club acts such as Big Bad Voodoo Daddy and Cherry Poppin' Daddies.

Other bands, such as Indigo Swing, have continued to experiment with swing, jazz and rockabilly, expanding the contemporary swing sound.

But Steele still sees room for musical growth. "Count Basie played to the dancers, giving them good tempos," said Steele, referring to a founder of the original swing movement. "The contemporary acts aren't quite used to that yet.'

Unlike many contemporary swing bands, which use a full horn section, Indigo Swing relies on a single tenor saxophone. A piano and stand-up bass control the six-man band. For fans of the group, that's what sets them apart from other swing acts.

"They're full-time swing musicians who are pushing the music



Indigo Swing band members Johnny Boyd on vocals and Baron Shul on tenor sax pulse and surge at the EMU ballroom Saturday night for their stop in Eugene.

back to its natural form," said Morris McClellan, who has seen Indigo Swing perform in Portland.

McClellan and many others dressed up for the occasion, while a handful of people took it a step further, donning fedoras, suspenders and clothing from the 1940s swing era.

"Looking the part is half the battle," Matthew Kakstys said. "But the baggy pants and leather shoes are popular because they're practical as well. You need something comfortable to dance in."

By 11 p.m. the crowd had dwindled and the atmosphere was more relaxed. Those that remained had loosened their ties,

unbuttoned their shirts and started improvising dance moves.

For many, swinging is also a way to relax and unwind. "It's pretty hard to think about your day-to-day problems when you're moving that fast, to a beat, with a smile on your face," Kakstys said.

That's one of the main reasons the contemporary swing movement shows no signs of slowing down. But nobody is sure if it will continue or how it will evolve.

"It's all very exciting," McClellan said. "But whatever happens, I'll continue to dance for the pure joy of it.'

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